

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers July 5, 2005

NETS Feature

Michigan Safety Belt Use Reaches New Record Level

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning announced that a record-setting number of Michigan motorists are buckling up following a two-week *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* statewide safety belt mobilization that took place in June. A recent statewide observation survey conducted by Wayne State University found nearly 93 percent of motorists were buckled up. More....

http://www.michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1586_1710-121482--,00.html

Don't Miss Out On This Opportunity

Don't miss out on an opportunity to attend the Michigan NETS Traffic Safety Symposium taking place on August 17, 2005 and sponsored by the Michigan NETS Advisory Board. The Symposium will take place at Steelcase Town Hall located in Grand Rapids. The Symposium will have nationally recognized speakers present on topics including: Risk Assessment and Negligent Entrustment; Defensive Driving Training Opportunities; Fleet Safety; Automotive Technologies and resources to enable you to implement traffic safety programs in your workplace. Internationally known, Dr. Jim Reese, will present the key note address on learning the necessary skills to overcome the effects of stress. On-line information including a registration form to attend this Symposium is now available at the following link: <http://www.michigan.gov/michnets/0,1607,7-188--120009--,00.html> For additional information please contact Dan Vartanian at (517) 333-5322 or e-mail: vartanid@michigan.gov

National NETS Kicks Off DSWW 2005 With 2nd Annual Employer Symposium

To help kick off this year's Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW) campaign, the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) and the Maryland T-SAFE program are co-hosting the 2nd annual Drive Safely Work Week Employer Symposium on September 29th at the Baltimore Convention Center. This one-day event features some of the nation's leading traffic safety experts and will provide participants with the latest and most useful strategies to keep their workforce safe on the road. More....

http://www.trafficsafety.org/newsletter/070105_symposiumfeat.asp

Latest Traffic Safety News

GM To Launch New OnStar System To Fleets, Commercial Customers

General Motors (GM) is expected to launch a new service called "OnStar Business Vehicle Manager" to help fleet and commercial customers monitor vehicle maintenance. The computer-based system will compile information and send service reports to Vehicle Manager customers. The reports will include odometer readings and oil change advisories. The new service will be launched in 2006. Meanwhile, GM will make OnStar standard on all vehicles by 2007.

UPS Launches New System To Conserve Fuel

UPS applies simple rules to reduce fuel consumption among its fleet of 88,000 vehicles. UPS advises drivers not to leave the engine idling, to drive the speed limit, and accelerate smoothly in order to save fuel. In addition, the company is launching a \$600 million system automating down to the minute how it handles and plans package deliveries. The system is expected to pre-plan the exact order for

delivering packages. The system will be in place by 2007 and it is predicted to save nearly 14 million gallons a year in fuel. Read the release at <http://www.pressroom.ups.com/mediakits/factsheet/0,2305,1134,00.html>

Pilot Program Raises Seat Belt Use Among Truckers In Virginia

According to new statistics, a national pilot program conducted in Virginia on Interstate 95 between Petersburg and Fredericksburg raised seat belt use among truckers by 11.5 percentage points in less than one month. The program included a media campaign, as well as increased enforcement of the seat belt law for truckers. Before the program was launched, a survey showed that fewer than 59 percent of truckers wore their seat belts. Read the full article at <http://www.etrucker.com/apps/news/article.asp?id=47828>

Study: Driving, Using Cell Phones Too Much For The Brain To Handle

New research conducted at Johns Hopkins University suggests that talking on a cell phone while driving is dangerous because the brain can't handle both tasks. Based on a series of imaging tests, researchers concluded that the brain can't give full attention to both the visual task of driving and the auditory task of listening at the same time. The study is published in The Journal of Neuroscience." Read the release at http://www.jhu.edu/news_info/news/home05/jun05/yantis.html

Local Broadcasters To Congress: Keep Traffic Reports Off Satellite Radio

When the Federal Communications Commission granted operating licenses to the country's two satellite radio services in 1997, it was under the stipulation that they would only offer national service, allowing local stations to maintain a competitive advantage by being able to provide local content. However, today the satellite radio providers offer localized traffic and weather reports in 20 key markets. Now local radio stations are voicing concerns that satellite radio is intruding on broadcast radio and are urging Congress to consider legislation that would restrict satellite radio's ability to localize content. Read the full article at <http://sanjose.bizjournals.com/sanjose/stories/2005/06/27/focus2.html>

Report: Majority Of States Allow Speed Cushion

A new survey conducted by the Governors Highway Safety Association found that authorities patrolling highways in 42 states give motorists a "cushion" of up to 10 mph over the speed limit before pulling them over. According to the group, the practice creates an unsafe comfort level and raises a potential safety hazard. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), speed is a factor in about one-third of all fatal crashes. Read the release at <http://www.ghsa.org/html/media/pressreleases/2005/061305.html> To view the report visit http://www.ghsa.org/html/publications/survey_ofthe_states.html#speeding

Technology Allows Cars To Communicate With One Another

DaimlerChrysler recently demonstrated new technology that allows cars to pass information to and from each other, as well as other roadside stations. The technology is known as dedicated short-range communications (DSRC). Vehicles equipped with DSRC can communicate with each other to help avoid collisions and access local weather and traffic information. DSRC is also expected to improve traffic safety and traffic flow. The automaker is currently working with the U.S. Department of Transportation to select locations for more testing. For more information visit <http://www.daimlerchrysler.com/dccom/0,,0-5-7180-1-465281-1-0-0-0-0-8668-7165-0-0-0-0-0-0,00.html>

Automakers Make Safety Features A Priority

Leading automakers are finding that industry-pressure coupled with consumer demand is paving the way for vehicle safety technology with government regulation playing less of a role. With a few notable

exceptions, such as air bags, NHTSA does not mandate technologies, but instead writes standards for injury thresholds and crashworthiness standards that automakers must meet. As automakers are finding that safety sells, more and more are rising to the occasion by making safety features standards and offering safety technologies including electronic stability control. Read the full article at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/services/site/premium/access-registered.intercept>

Study On Obesity, Sleep Deprivation Linked To Truckers

Two studies published in the Annals of Internal Medicine suggest a direct correlation between sleep deprivation and obesity, raising safety concerns among truckers. While little is known about truckers and sleep, it is widely known that a significant number have irregular sleep patterns. There are also concerns that truck drivers tend to be overweight due to the sedentary nature of driving and poor nutritional choices. Read the full article at <http://www.todaystrucking.com/displayarticle.cfm?ID=4087>

Honda To Provide Crash Test Data On Window Stickers

Honda Motor Co. has announced that it will publish government crash test data on the window stickers of all 2006 model year Honda and Acura vehicles. The crash test data would be required on window stickers under the Senate versions of the federal highway bill. The automaker would become the first to provide the data on stickers. The data is derived from NHTSA's New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) for frontal, side and rollover crash safety test ratings. Read the release at <http://corporate.honda.com/press/article.aspx?id=2005062831841>

TRB Releases New Report On Event Data Recorders

The Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program released Web Only Document 75: Use of Event Data Recorder (EDR) Technology for Highway Cash Data Analysis. The report examines the legal issues surrounding EDRs and the consumer acceptability of EDR data collection. View the report at http://trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp_w75.pdf

TTI: HOV Lanes Linked To Higher Crash Rates

A recent study by the Texas Transportation Institute found that high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes have led to an increase in crashes. The study revealed that the rate of crashes involving injuries increased as much as 56 percent on stretches of Dallas highways that have HOV lanes adjacent to regular lanes without concrete barriers separating the two. A similar study in Southern California confirmed the findings and found that crash rates rose 11 percent in several locations where HOV lanes were added, lanes narrowed, or both. The Maryland State Highway Administration also examined its crash data involving HOV lanes and found the crash rate was twice as high as the statewide average. For more information visit http://tti.tamu.edu/product/product_details.asp?book_id=25947

News from USDOT

NHTSA Praises GM, Automakers Improvements In Rollover Ratings

According to NHTSA, General Motors and other automakers are doing a better job of building sport-utility vehicles (SUVs) that resist rollovers. According to the agency's chief administrator, among the 2005 models, 24 of 64 SUVs received four stars, the second highest grade. The administrator credited the improvements to design changes and anti-rollover technology. Vehicle rollovers contributed to more than 10,000 deaths last year, and more than half of deaths involving SUVs are in rollovers. Read the full article at <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000103&sid=a1BYXDT5Blpc&refer=us#>

Study: Hands-Free Fails To Solve Driver Distraction Problem

New research conducted by NHTSA and Virginia Tech Transportation Institute found that using a cell phone while driving is a key contributing factor to traffic crashes with hands-free devices providing little safety benefit. Using cameras and internal car sensors, researchers tracked 100 drivers for a one-year period. It was concluded that hands-free devices, including head-sets and voice-activated dialing, led to longer dialing times and offset the potential benefit of keeping both hands on the wheel. Read the full article at <http://www.detnews.com/2005/autosinsider/0506/10/A01-210098.htm>

NHTSA To Release New Rules Governing Event Data Recorders

The federal government plans to release new rules for event data recorders (EDRs) as early as this summer. The rules aren't expected to require automakers to install EDRs in every vehicle. However, if they are installed, the new rule will require the boxes to record a minimum of 29 pieces of data, which is more than current EDRs record. The rules would also require automakers to disclose the information to consumers in the owner's manual and explain why it is there. Read the full article at <http://www.wired.com/news/print/0,1294,67952,00.html>

FHWA Releases Safety Evaluation Of Red-Light Cameras

The Federal Highway Administration has released a report examining the effectiveness of red-light running cameras in reducing crashes. The study included 132 test sites and focused primarily on rear-end and right-angle crashes. The study's results reflected the results of previous research, which demonstrated a decrease in right-angle crashes and a subsequent increase in rear-end crashes. View the study at <http://www.tfhr.gov/safety/pubs/05048/05048.pdf>

NHTSA Releases New Report On Speeding

NHTSA released a report that examines speeding-related crashes and speeding drivers. The report identifies driver, vehicle, and environmental characteristics involved in speeding-related crashes. Age, gender, and alcohol involvement of the speeding driver, roadway surface condition, and geometry as well as roadway function class are also analyzed in the report. The report evaluates the overall trend of speeding-related fatalities and fatal crashes by state from 1983 to 2002. View the full report at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/Rpts/2005/809839.pdf>

International Traffic Safety News:

Will Satellite Navigation Systems Do Away With Maps?

As portable satellite navigation systems are becoming cheaper and more sophisticated, experts in Britain are predicting the demise of traditional printed maps. The devices, which were once limited to luxury cars as an optional upgrade, are now portable and can be used in rental cars. One such device, allows drivers in the UK to select the language, voice, and preferred accent. It can also help motorists avoid speeding tickets by allowing them to download the locations of thousands of speed cameras throughout Britain. Read the full article at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4124760.stm>

UK To Use Picture-Based Roadway Signs

A roadway improvement project in the UK will incorporate new signs that deliver pictures in addition to text. The signage, expected to be in use by the end of 2006, is capable of delivering both text and picture messages in two colors and are designed to give drivers the latest information about road conditions. Research shows that drivers understand picture-based messages up to a second faster than text-based messages. Read the full article at <http://www.publictechnology.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=3138>

Australian Study Investigates Older Drivers, Driver Cessation

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau released a report investigating the process and outcomes of driving cessation for older people. The report suggests resources designed to assist in the transition from driving cessation to safe transportation. View the report at http://www.atsb.gov.au/road/pdf/driver_cessation.pdf

Traffic Fuels Aggressive Driving Behaviors In The UK

A new survey conducted by Autoglass has found that a majority of UK fleet drivers are engaging in aggressive driving behaviors as a result of enduring stressful driving situations including increasing traffic congestion and roadwork. The survey results found that a total of 64 percent of drivers admitted to driving aggressively and 68 percent indicated that they tailgate other drivers. In addition, nine out of 10 drivers regularly break the speed limit to make up for lost time in traffic.

Study Analyzes Psychological Predictors Of Problematic Cell Phone Use

Despite recent bans of mobile phone use in certain jurisdictions, drivers still continue their use. A new study sought to predict usage with a specific focus on extraversion, self-esteem, neuroticism, gender and age. The study concluded that problematic use was a function of age, extraversion, and low self-esteem, but not neuroticism. The study included groups that should be targeted in intervention campaigns.

Source: CyberPsychology and Behavior Authors: A. Bianchi and J.G. Phillips

New Technology To Assist Older Drivers

According to new research conducted by the National Information and Communications Technology Australia (NICTA), cars that can recognize road signs and spot speed limits could help older drivers stay behind the wheel a few years longer. Australian mental health experts are expected to examine aging, driving skills, and the benefits of such in-car hazard-detection technologies. NICTA's road-sign recognition system can detect speed and traffic signs, and with a "beep" alert drivers of any hazards they might have missed. Read the full article at <http://reg.theage.com.au/login.do?status=FAIL&errMsg=&errCode=10001&site=AGE&server=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.theage.com.au&data=%2Fnews%2Ficon%2FDriver-revivers%2F2005%2F06%2F15%2F1118645849600.html%3Fonclick%3Dtrue&count=0>

TIRF Releases State-Specific Survey Results On Impaired Driving

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) has released the results of its state-specific surveys on impaired driving. The surveys drew on the responses of criminal justice professionals from 41 states. Part of a comprehensive research project by TIRF, the surveys offer useful information to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the U.S. criminal DWI system. For more information visit http://www.trafficinjuryresearch.com/DWI_systemImprovements/stateSpecificInformation.cfm

Researchers In Europe Develop Night Vision Driving System

Researchers in Europe have developed an on-board night vision system to improve driver visibility. It is estimated that while drivers travel just 28 percent of their miles at night, 55 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities occur after sunset. The new system, developed by a team of carmakers, automotive suppliers, and university researchers is expected to increase safety by highlighting unexpected events, improving the visibility of road signs, and assisting drivers on unknown roads. According to researchers, the system will ensure the timely detection of obstacles invisible to the human eye under nighttime driving conditions. Read the full article at <http://istresults.cordis.lu/index.cfm/section/news/tpl/article/BrowsingType/Features/ID/77140>

Study: Odors Can Affect Driver Behavior

According to the RAC Foundation, a British automobile association, different odors can affect the way a motorist drives. According to the research, fast food scents are likely to increase aggressive driving behaviors, while scents including peppermint, cinnamon, lemon, and coffee can improve concentration. Other dangerous odors include chamomile, jasmine, and lavender because they can cause drivers to over relax and fall asleep. Read the full article at

<http://money.cnn.com/2005/06/04/Autos/funonwheels/smells/index.htm>

Volunteer Drivers Pose Roadway Risk In The UK

Volunteers in Britain could pose as a major roadway risk, according to the London West Region of the Association of Car Fleet Operators. Many of these unpaid workers often transport goods and people in their private vehicles. According to the group, this creates a health and safety problem, if the organizations have not ensured that the volunteers are fit to drive for business purposes. Meanwhile, the Association is having a difficult time convincing organizations that they have a responsibility to their volunteer drivers on the road.

UK Launches New Campaign To Prevent Alcohol Impaired Driving

Company drivers in the UK are being targeted by a new summer campaign to prevent alcohol impaired driving. Led by the government, the campaign message is: "It takes less than you might think to become a drink-driver." The goal of the campaign is to highlight the fact that there are just as many alcohol-related fatalities as there are during the Christmas season. For more information visit

<http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/>

UK To Consider Tough Fleet Legislation

New legislation in the UK is expected to significantly impact fleet management. One such proposal includes the Corporate Manslaughter Bill, which will be applied when someone has been killed because senior management failed to take reasonable care for the safety of its employees. The UK government is also considering a "road charging" scheme, which would introduce a pay-as-you-go system for roadway users. In addition to these proposals, the Road Safety Bill will aim to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured by 40 percent by 2010 through increased enforcement and tougher penalties.

TIRF Releases New Report On Alcohol Interlock Programs

TIRF recently released a report regarding alcohol ignition interlock programs. The report focused on how to increase acceptance, improve participation, and compliance with the program. The findings are based on the presentations from the fourth international symposium on alcohol ignition interlock programs held during October 2003. For more information and to view the report visit

<http://trafficingjuryresearch.com/whatNew/whatNew.cfm?intNewsID=156&intContactID=3>